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## INTERVIEW SUMMARY

**Interview:** Jacob Auterson  
**Title:** First Officer, Republic Airlines  
**Location:** Telephone Interview  
**Date/Time:** February 27, 2008. 1000 EST  
**Present:** Cox, Roger - NTSB  
Anderson, Vicki - FAA  
Davis, Jeff - Republic Airlines  
Pranger, Pete - Personal representative  
Flynn, Patrick - Teamsters (first 45 min)

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During the interview, Mr. Auterson stated the following:

His full name is Jacob Donald Auterson.

His date of birth is 12/27/1982.

His date of hire at Republic Airlines is 11/27/2007.

His certificates and ratings are: commercial multi-engine land, instrument, CFI, CFII, CFI multi-engine, Shorts 330/360 SIC type, EMB-170/190 SIC type.

His flying time is: total 1530/ PIC 529/ type/66.

His recent flight experience is: 7 days 15/ 30 days 66/ 90 days 66/ one year 1000.

He was released to line flying on 2/03/2008 and the length of his OE was 25 hours.

He has a Bachelor of Science degree from Indiana State University and graduated summer 2006.

His last previous position was FO on the Shorts 330/360 in Warsaw Indiana..

He has been involved in no previous incidents, accidents or emergencies and has never been disciplined as a pilot.

During the accident flight, they pushed back from the gate and were cleared to taxi to runway 19 and told to hold in the run up pad, where the Captain positioned the airplane next to a US Airways A319. They crossed runway 15, called the tower and were given a sequence to follow a UAL aircraft positioned on the far north end of the pad. When the UAL airplane was cleared into position and hold, the Republic was told "follow him and hold short." A US Airways B737 came from the right. It was not certain what frequency he was on. He may not have known his sequence. The FO was occupied watching him. The FO then looked over and saw the Captain look back and then release the parking brake. He wanted to make sure they were going to clear the airbus on the left side. The aircraft crept forward. He was shocked that the airplane then struck the airbus. He was caught off guard. They called the tower to let them know. They received an ACARS from dispatch, talked to ATC, talked to flight attendants and passengers. They sat there almost two hours. Ground personnel inspected the airplane and said there was no fuel leak and minor damage. The airbus was towed back in first, and then a second tug came for them.

The guy running the tug had to stop the airplane, put up stairs, and board mechanics to occupy the pilot seats for the tow. The two pilots stood in the doorway until the airplane was put back on a gate.

This flight was on the last day of a four day trip, and this was the second flight of the day. The day began at New Orleans and they were going to Rochester, NY. Duty up to that time was 3.5 hours. He was not very familiar with the airport; it was his fourth time there. He had no uncertainty about his taxi clearance. He had no concerns about wingtip clearance, maneuvering space, or proximity to other aircraft when taxiing to the pad. He is not able to recall the airplane's wingspan. His only method of judging wingtip clearance is just to clear it visually or to use a wing walker. He has never heard whether the wingtip sweeps out an arc greater or less than the nose. The only thing discussed in training was that the tail would be the critical clearance item.

He understood his taxi clearance. The FO was planning to fly the leg but the Captain was taxiing. They were on tower frequency when in the run up pad. All aircraft complied with ATC instructions except possibly the US Airways B737. The Captain did not express any concern about tip clearance from the airplane they struck. He did not feel the need to ask the tower about room to maneuver. He recalls that the wingspan is 85'. He has been on one previous flight (on OE) where he was in this particular run up pad.

When the Captain released the parking brake to taxi it was just a matter of seconds before it struck the other airplane. Once the UAL airplane had departed the US Airways airbus could have rolled forward and moved to the left to make room. It did not occur to him to use the radio to ask him to do that. There may have been airplanes to the right but he's not sure. They were concerned about the B737 to the right because the tower had said they were next to go and yet the B737 kept creeping ahead. He couldn't tell if the B737 was on the tower frequency but he should have been. He probably didn't know what his sequence was. He doesn't recall if the B737 made any transmissions. He doesn't think the A319 made any transmissions until the accident. The A319 was on ground frequency after the accident so he doesn't know what they said.

His workload that day was pretty busy. The checklists were completed and there were no MEL's on the airplane. They had noticed a vibration during the previous flight but did not write it up. They had no passenger or cabin crew issues. The Captain conducted a crew briefing at the beginning of the trip. They had flown with both flight attendants for the entire trip. He had no issues with ATC, with weather, or with dispatch. He had no distractions. He had no difficulty hearing the radio. Outside visual references from this cockpit are very good. He has to lean over pretty far to the side to see the wingtip.

He was well rested. He could have used more rest the night before beginning the trip, but had caught up on his rest. He went to bed the previous night at 1000 pm, awoke at 0415, and show time was 0530 at New Orleans. He is more of an evening person, but he felt the schedule was normal and reasonable.

He has had no changes to his health in the last year. He has had no changes in his financial or personal life. His vision is better than 20/20 and his hearing is good. He takes no prescription medication and only drinks alcohol on occasion. His last drink was 5-6 days previous. He doesn't use tobacco.

He thinks that he could have had better communication with the Captain during the accident. He thinks the Captain only released the brakes one time. They could not have cleared the other airplane from the position they were in. He was trained to say something if necessary in such an event. He would say something if placed in this situation again. He felt he was free to express himself with this Captain.

This Captain was typical. He flew the plane well. To improve, he could have a little more situational awareness.

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## INTERVIEW SUMMARY

**Interview:** Tim Hilliard  
**Title:** Captain, Republic Airlines  
**Location:** Telephone Interview  
**Date/Time:** February 27, 2008. 1115 EST  
**Present:** Cox, Roger - NTSB  
Anderson, Vicki - FAA  
Davis, Jeff - Republic Airlines  
Pranger, Pete - Personal representative

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During the interview, Captain Hilliard stated the following:

His name is Harold Timothy Hilliard.

His date of birth is 4/23/1964.

His date of hire at Republic is 1/04/1999.

His certificates and ratings are: ATP multi-engine, commercial single engine, SF340 type, EMB 145, EMG 170/190.

His flying time is: total 8125/ PIC 7900/ type 1655.

His recent flight experience is: 7 days 25/ 30 days 65/ 90 days 225/ one year 750.

All of his EMB170 hours are PIC.

He completed three years of college at Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

His last previous position before the airline was as a pilot for the State of Florida Forestry Department flying a PA28, which he did for five years.

He has had no previous accidents. He had an altitude deviation about 4-5 years ago. He had an emergency in 1995 working for State of Florida. The engine had a manufacturing defect. A connecting rod failed and he made a forced landing. NTSB investigated. There were no injuries. His only discipline was for the altitude deviation at Chautauqua, around 2003. He filed a NASA report then, and an ASAP report with the company for this accident.

Regarding the accident flight, they left the gate at DCA and taxied to runway 19. He was told to hold short of runway 15, which was active. Several other airplanes crossed first and when he crossed there was congestion. He didn't want to block people or cause any confusion when he pulled into the run up pad next to the US Airways airbus. "There were three of us there. We were told we were next for takeoff after United." A US Airways B737 was coming from the right so we were hesitant about moving. The FO called the tower who verified they were next. The 737 continued to inch forward, so he decided not to move. He checked the proximity of the airbus, and it looked like he could clear it and then felt the impact. He set the parking brake. He saw that they did contact the wing of the airbus. The angle they were at was a little more difficult than in other cases. He did

look three or four times. It didn't seem unusually close. He made notification calls. The airbus was making calls on tower; they asked for emergency trucks. In the hold short area you should be on tower. He heard no transmissions from the US Airways 737 before, during or after the accident. He thought they were on 120.7, the tower frequency. He would guess that they did hear the tower say that the Republic was next for takeoff. The B737 "intermittently" held his position. Perhaps he felt he had to move up for other airplanes. He stopped and moved forward, and then did it again. He couldn't say if there were other airplanes behind him. His concern was clearing the airplanes. He didn't move his airplane until he saw the 737 stop. The 737 had made about three movements. He focused on both the 737 and the airbus.

He has seen other airplanes move forward in similar situations but he would be guessing as to why. He has seen it at PHL and CLT and maybe other places. It could be they are off frequency. This movement happens with all airlines. It would have been possible for the US Airways airbus to move over after the UAL departed but it would have been tight. Usually the tower instructs airplanes to do this. He would expect tower to provide an instruction; otherwise he wouldn't think that moving over voluntarily would be necessary. It's a small space and he would have stayed in the same place if he were in the airbus captain's position.

When he released the brakes he planned to move ahead and then go a little to the right. He didn't think they were that close to the airbus. Pulling up close is "the protocol at all these airports." Most of the time, 90-95% of the time, the controller instructs you. This time there were no instructions. People were kind of disorganized. He intended to be able to move up from where he was parked. There were two times where he released the brakes and then stopped. In retrospect, he should have left more room. "You judge where the wingtip is from experience and from visual judgment." At night a nav light might help provide a cue to wingtip location. The company doesn't provide any cues in their training.

The workload was busy on the day of the accident. There was congestion. They were catching up from being delayed in New Orleans and they felt a bit pressed. They had no issues with MEL's with the airplane, with passengers or cabin crew, ATC, weather or dispatch. The only distraction was the amount of time spent on an active runway while taxiing. There were several airplanes ahead of them and while they were stopped on runway 15 they heard tower clear an airplane to land on that runway. It was uncomfortable. They had taxied on "K" and then were stuck out on runway 15 too long. Normally at DCA it's organized, but there were a lot of airplanes, and it was congested.

He had no difficulty hearing radio transmissions. Cockpit visibility in the EMB170 is good, although the angle they were at while parked required him to move his upper body forward and lift up to see the wingtip.

He felt rested for the most part. During the previous night while in the hotel in New Orleans there was quite a bit of noise from adjacent rooms. He called the front desk about it, and it took him about three hours to get to sleep, and he got about 5-6 hours of sleep

total. They had an 0530 show, and for the first time in nine years he was late. This was due to the fact that the alarm clock didn't work, so he didn't awake until he was called by the front desk at 0500. He told his crew to go ahead without him. He still made it to the airport by 0530, but he felt rushed. Once he arrived he found that the airplane had not been refueled, and it took a half hour delay to get that done. They were scheduled to depart at 0600 and left at 0635. He didn't feel unduly stressed because he is used to having delays for various reasons. Although delays add stress, he takes it as part of the job, and it is pretty much the norm. "It is out of our control."

At Republic it is standard to have 30 minutes from show time to departure, except the first day of a four day, where you have 45 minutes. He would call himself a morning person. The four day trip they were on was a normal schedule. The last three months he has flown more than normal, but not for any particular reason. He is a line holder. In December and January he had a lot of occasions where he only had two days off between trips rather than three, which was more customary for him. He had a PC and recurrent ground school the previous month, which went fine. He had a ten day vacation in January 2008, which is the first one he had taken in nine years. One reason he took the vacation was that he had been working more than normal. Republic puts out a bid in November for following year vacation and he had not put in a bid before. He felt he needed the money and "could cash it in." Your time and a half accrual can be carried over and cashed in. Many pilots bid for days off rather than use vacation. Keeping vacation also provides a backup to short term disability. The biggest reasons to not take vacation are financial reasons. Quite a few pilots don't take the vacation.

He would say he is in decent, or fair, health. He has not had significant health issues in the last year. The biggest change in his financial situation is that they bought a house, and the mortgage is twice what they are used to paying. They moved to a different State, which was a minor adjustment. The main reason to move was so that he wouldn't be a commuter. He is now living in Indiana, Pennsylvania, which is about 1.5 hours east of Pittsburgh, his base. He had a few issues with the kids, but he wouldn't call it a significant change in his personal life. His vision is 20/20, his hearing is fine, he takes no prescription drugs, and he drinks alcohol very little. It had been about 12 days since he had had a drink prior to the accident. He does smoke cigarettes, and had last smoked four hours prior while in New Orleans. He is trying to quit. He had taken no drugs of any kind in the 72 hours prior to the accident.

Asked if there was anything he would have done different, he said he would leave more space between himself and other airplanes in the future. Even if the tower chastises them, he would leave ample room. He thought he had enough room, but now he realizes that he didn't.

The First Officer was fine, he was confident and he had a good attitude. He was a pleasure to work with, very by the book and open to learning. The only area where he could improve is just gaining more experience, but that is not a criticism. In most cases where he is flying with new first officers, he feels like he has to do more and be vigilant, but in this case he wasn't a problem. The FO's callout of the 737 was not a distraction.

He hears from other pilots that there is some pilot turnover, but he isn't well informed on the subject. About 60-70% of the time his copilot is new, but it's not a problem. As far as regional airlines go, this one is not having as much turnover, and it is a good place to work. Their work rules are better than most. They do have a fatigue policy. He did call in fatigued once last year, and there were no consequences. Pilots are reluctant to do it but not because of company pressure or discipline.